



## 1. Introduction to Umbria Region

Umbria is an inland region of Central Italy which stretches out over a surface of about 8.456KM<sup>2</sup>. It is subdivided into two provinces: Perugia, the regional capital, and Terni. From a morphological point of view, the regional territory is predominantly hilly and mountainous, so much so that the Umbrian landscape looks like it is made up of an endless dance of waves which characterise a great part of it; basins, valley bottoms and plains occupy only 6% of the total area. Between these soft hills there are: the valley of the Tiber, the third Italian river which crosses from North to South forming the region's frame and some lakes such as Trasimeno and the lake of Piediluco.

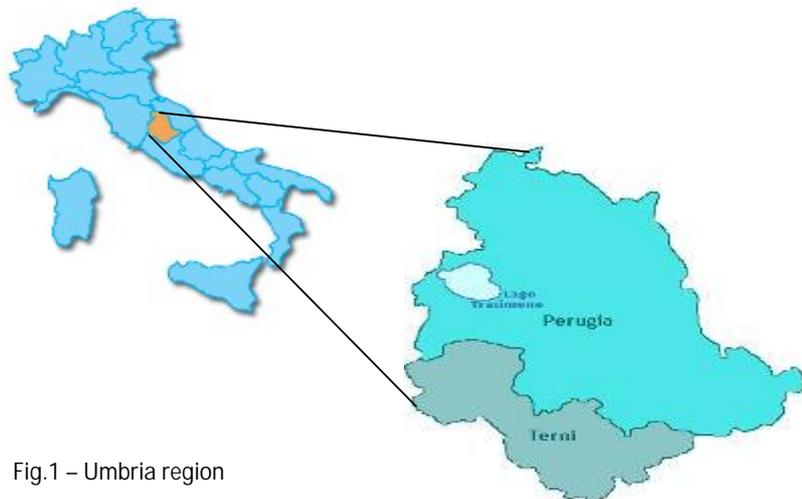


Fig.1 – Umbria region



The region's mountainous character is represented by landscapes of great natural interest among which; The Coscerno-Aspra Massif, Mount Subasio in Assisi, The Martani Mountains between Spolefino and Tuderte, the Amelia Mountains and Mount Peglia above Orvieto. This determines a great richness of vast deep woods predominantly made up of Oaks. Among the most notable mountains, rich in even spiritual meaning is Mount Subasio, covered, in the past, in an

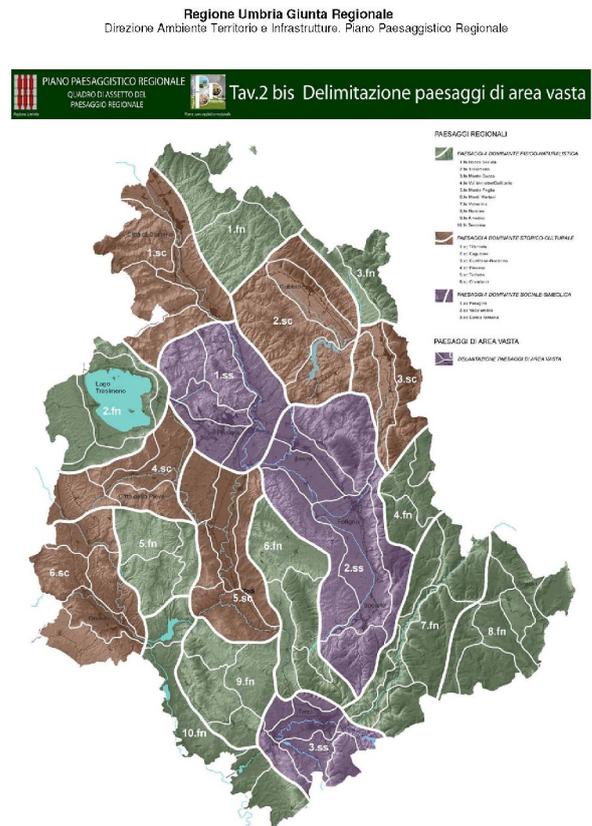
uninterrupted stretch of tall Oaks. Today, the splendid ilex still remains around the prison hermitage of Saint Francis of Assisi, rated one of the most important in Italy. Six regional parks and a national park safeguard and valorise this extraordinary landscape heritage. Details can be found on the website: [www.agriforeste.regione.umbria.it/canale.asp?id=517](http://www.agriforeste.regione.umbria.it/canale.asp?id=517).

As well as Perugia, the regional capital of ancient Etruscan origin, the Umbrian landscape is dotted with an extensive network of splendid cities of art and history such as Todi, Orvieto and Spoleto and of small villages that are rich in reminders of the past, among which Assisi, Spello and Trevi. What is extraordinary in terms of consistency, variety and historical importance is the presence of ancient settlements whose castles and medieval villages conserve its roman origins. However, such a landscape is also strongly forged by a human presence as shown by the extensive plantations of vineyards and olive groves, orderly cereal crops, brightened up by blotches of yellow from the sunflowers. Moreover, it is a region with plenty of water; in fact, apart from the Tiber River, the other important regional feature is Lake Trasimeno, the fourth national lake in terms of surface and made a Site of Community Importance ("Habitat" Directive 92/42/CEE) and Special Protection Area ("Birds" Directive 79/403/CEE). Then also worth mentioning are the springs of Clitunno, an ideal place to comprehend the religious tangle, celebrated by Pliny the younger in the first century A.D and by many poets and artists such as Byron and Carducci; these springs became a place of pleasure with very premature touristic valorisation. Also, the beneficial and healing properties of Umbrian mineral springs have been renowned for millennia and today, they are used both for body care in spa centres as well as for bottling. Among the most famous of healing waters is that of San Gemini, rich in properties which make it particularly suitable for children.

## 2. Umbria landscape in the regional landscape plan

The Umbria Region, with the aim of safeguarding and protecting a landscape of high naturalistic-environmental, as well as historical-cultural and social-symbolic value and of defining specific protection and management strategies, is in the process of establishing a unique planning tool for the regional landscape: the Regional Landscape Plan (P.P.R) which operates in respect to

the European Landscape Convention and the landscape and cultural heritage code which, issued with the legislative decree no. 42 of 22 January 2004, effective since 01 May 2004, is the main Italian regulatory benchmark. This plan aims to govern the transformation of the territory to maintain the Umbrian landscape's peculiar identifiable character by pursuing landscaping objectives. In its elaboration phase 19 landscapes of regional identity have been identified.



Map of the 19 landscapes of regional identity

Such landscapes required a close cognitive, interpretative, and evaluating examination, collected in the Landscape Atlas; which has allowed for the identification of "Resources of identity". This has allowed for the definition of three main types according to the dominance of relative landscape characteristics, defining three large regional landscape families, or rather, landscapes of physical-naturalistic, historical-cultural and social-symbolic importance, identifying within them their "structures of regional identity", that is, those landscape contexts which best represent the identity of regional landscapes. Therefore, this study has allowed for the characterization and best interpretation of landscape signs in the territory, allowing for the identification of its main peculiarities and, moreover, has recognized the villas, parks and historical gardens, widespread structures of identity

which constitute a vast artistic-historical and naturalistic-environmental heritage in the region.

### 3. Villas, parks and historical gardens in Italy

Italy has a heritage of about 5000 villas, parks and historical gardens which make it one of the most particular and widespread basic units and that are subject to specific protection measures. Many large villas and historical parks are owned by the state or local entities and are open to the public. Some have even been declared world heritage (such as the Reggia di Caserta, the Villa d'Este in Tivoli and the Botanic gardens of Padua) and they are listed as UNESCO world heritage sites. The, numerically more consistent, nucleus is private-owned and includes examples of prominence. The main instrument of legislative protection is currently the Landscape and Cultural Heritage Code (Legislative Decree no 42 of 2004) which provides for what has already been sanctioned by precedent protection laws no. 1089 ('cultural heritage' commitments) and 1497 of 1939 (landscape commitment). Therefore, the gardens declared to be of historical- artistic interest , and thus" committed", are subject to a particular legal regime which provides for, among other things, the prohibition of their destruction, damage or use that is not compatible with their historical- artistic character, or any such use that could compromise their conservation. Awareness of the value that these historical gardens represent has determined the establishment of guide lines and since 1982, the drawing up of two maps, of Florence, which define the object of protection and give recommendations for their maintenance, conservation, restoration and re-establishment:

1) The map for the safeguarding of historical gardens (Florence 21 May 1981, International Committee of Historical Gardens ICOMOS-IFLA)

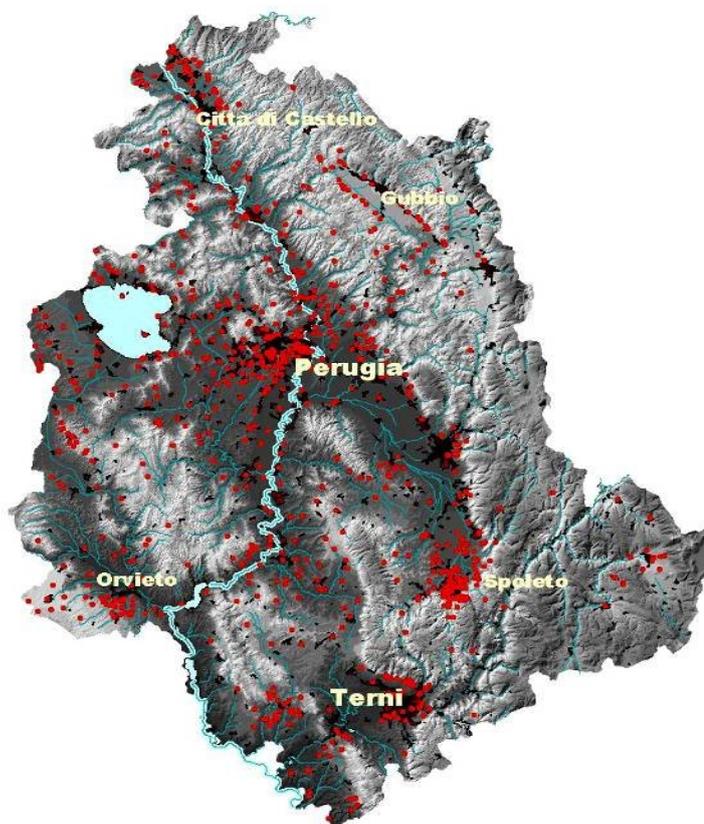
[www.pabaac.beniculturali.it/opencms/opencms/BASAE/sito-BASAE/MenuPrincipale\\_BASAE/Musei\\_-\\_Mostre/Giardini-e-parchistorici/.html?id=8340&pagename=8340](http://www.pabaac.beniculturali.it/opencms/opencms/BASAE/sito-BASAE/MenuPrincipale_BASAE/Musei_-_Mostre/Giardini-e-parchistorici/.html?id=8340&pagename=8340)

2) Italian map of historical gardens

<http://151.1.141.125/patrimonio/giardini/carta/italiana.html>

### 3.1 Villas, parks and historical gardens in Umbria

The widespread heritage of villas, parks and historical gardens is a strategic resource for Umbria, which, for many years, has been committed to defending and valorizing this asset through knowledge, study and research, financial interventions for the conservation, recovery and promotion. These issues are defined in the regional Landscape plan as widespread structures of identity which constitute a vast historical- artistic heritage, as a mark of a specific settlement developed in the anthropization process which involved the Umbrian countryside and which, therefore, represents the evolution of rural culture. Such historical places are the foundations of the value of the territory due to their diffusion and their close ties to the rural landscape. Several steps have been taken by the Umbria region to valorize and emphasize such heritage, among these steps, the first was to carry out a census on a regional scale (1985) which allowed them to draw up a sort of state of the art of the current priorities which turned out to be at least 800 units (not all with parks and historical gardens), located mainly in areas in the mid and low hills.



Distribution of villas, parks and historical gardens in the regional territory

Some actions for the valorisation and popularization of these issues have been the promotion of some publications among which “Ville, Parchi e Giardini in Umbria” and ‘Parchi e Giardini in Umbria: un segno distintivo nel paesaggio’.



Some publications on parks and historical gardens published by the Umbria region

Moreover, interventions for the improvement and recovery of parks and historical gardens of some of these emergencies have been financed with community funds DOCUP 2006/2007 and will be financed with POR funds 2007/2013. Since 2007 feasibility studies have been carried out, geared towards intensifying the knowledge of these issues with a view to building a Regional Network of Umbrian Gardens which was successfully created in 2010 (with DGR no. 451 of 15/03/2010). The network’s main objectives are: to valorise these entities as high quality “Landscape Heritage”; to share and put in place conservation, management and valorisation actions for these assets even concerning the surrounding landscapes; to safeguard the biodiversity and environmental quality of these priorities, develop activities of European cooperation aimed towards exchanging good practices and knowledge, sharing ideas and plans on a methodological and operational level. Another fundamental objective is to promote this circuit on a regional, national and European level.

### 3.2 The RUGiad'A network

Following the studies conducted, the RUGiad'A network (network of parks and historical gardens of Umbria) was created which currently comprises twelve of the 800 historical Umbrian areas registered in 1985, and is born out of the realization of the value of a heritage that is deeply rooted in the conservation and the development of the rural landscape, with the aim of sharing actions of environmental, cultural and touristic

valorisation and protection. More to be found on <http://fondazionevillafabri.org/it/rete-ville.php>.

The historical parks and gardens which currently form the network, have been registered and filed with an 'ad hoc' approach, which has allowed for the drawing up of detailed charts which, as well as highlighting the intrinsic peculiarities, have allowed for the organization of popularizing and cognitive events concerning these areas. In this work, analyses of have been prepared regarding landscape contexts concerning these areas. Here, Umbria region has implemented a web portal which collects all the material and studies carried out.



Some web pages of the RUGiad'A network's portal

Moreover, since 2011, the Umbria region has delved into the study on the numerous historical gardens (about 54), designed by Pietro Porcinai, one of the most important Italian landscape architects of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.





Garden's designed in Umbria by the famous landscape architect Porcinai

#### 4. Umbria region's contribution "Hybrid Parks"

The contribution which the Umbria region would like to make to the Hybrid parks project is that of dealing with the role which parks and historic gardens play in the territorial context and the contribution that they can make to the tourism development policies by raising awareness of their importance in the social and economic fabric considering them as a flywheel of the sustainable development of the territory. Another objective is to valorise the network of villas, parks and historical gardens so that they can (in a later phase) enter into the EGHN network with the creation of a "route" which emphasizes and valorises the environmental and landscape peculiarities connected to these assets.

#### 5. Umbria region's experience in European projects

The Umbria region is an active collaborator in European international cooperation projects which geared towards the development of research and studies for the diffusion of the culture of the landscape, promoting its protection and valorisation.

The following are the projects adhered to by the region:

##### 1. INTERREG IIC, MEDOC:

- Vie Romane del Mediterraneo (Roman routes in the Mediterranean), LEADPARTNER
- "PAN" – "Mediterranean system of natural and cultural parks" - PARTNER

- «Base de données et cartographie de la biodiversité» PARTNER
  - “Restauro” –rigenerazione e salvaguardia dei centri storici (restoration of historical centres); PARTNER
  - “Paesaggi Mediterranei ed Alpini” (Alpine and Mediterranean landscapes); PARTNER
2. INTERREG III B MEDOCC:
- «VILLAS» (stately homes and castles) PARTNER
3. INTERREG IIIC
- “MO.NO.PI” - (Monument Nomination and Pilot Implementation as an Alternative Form of Architecture and Religion Tourism) PARTNER
4. INTERREG III B CADSES
- “LOTO (landscape opportunities for territorial organization)” PARTNER
5. INTERREG III B MEDOCC
- «PAYS.DOC (Bonnes Pratiques pour le Paysage)» PARTNER
6. PROGRAMMA MED 2007-2013 (MED PROGRAMME)
- PAYS.MED.URBAN - “The high quality of the landscape as a key element in the sustainability and the competitiveness of the Mediterranean urban areas” ([www.paysmed.net/homepage.php](http://www.paysmed.net/homepage.php))
7. HYBRID PARKS AND INTERREG IVC
- [www.hybridparks.eu](http://www.hybridparks.eu)